Sally Ann's Experience

BY Eliza Calvert Hall

Author of "AUNT JANE OF KENTUCKY"

Mary Katherine Depp Nov. 8, 1923

SALLY ANN'S EXPERIENCE

"So he gets up, easy-like, with his red bandanna to his mouth, and starts out."

Frontispiece. *See page 25.*

SALLY ANN'S EXPERIENCE

BY

ELIZA CALVERT HALL

AUTHOR OF "AUNT JANE OF KENTUCKY,"
"THE LAND OF LONG AGO," ETC.

With Frontispiece by
G. PATRICK NELSON

And Decorations by
THEODORE B. HAPGOOD

BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
1910

Copyright, 1898,
By John Brisbane Walker.

Copyright, 1907, 1910,
By Little, Brown, and Company.

All rights reserved.

Introduction

WHY I WROTE "SALLY ANN'S EXPERIENCE" [1]

IN writing "Sally Ann's Experience," my purpose was to show the iniquity of the

[1] Condensed from the article published in *The Cosmopolitan Magazine*, July, 1908, with the following Note by the Editor: "The great popularity of 'Sally Ann's Experience' is undoubtedly due to the fact that its theme is a matter that 'has touched directly or indirectly the life of nearly every woman.'

"Although it is ten years to a month since the tale first appeared in the *Cosmopolitan*, and it now stands as the first chapter of 'Aunt Jane of Kentucky,' demands for the issue (long out of print) of the magazine containing it come into this office with remarkable regularity.

"This unusual degree of popularity has led the author to tell why she wrote the story. We have no doubt that every reader of the very interesting account of the genesis of 'Sally Ann's Experience' will wish to

old common law of England in regard to the property rights of married women.

In Kentucky, under this old common law, a husband could collect and spend his wife's wages. Marriage gave to the husband all the wife's personal property that could be reduced to possession, and the use of all her real estate owned at the time or acquired by her after marriage, with power to rent the same for not more than three years at a time and receive the rent.

By the common law of courtesy and dower the husband on the death of the wife inherited *all* personalty not hitherto reduced to possession, and when there were children, he inherited a life interest in *all* her real estate; while the wife, when there were children, inherited only *one-third* of her

read or re-read the famous story. For their convenience, as well as on account of the above-mentioned continual demand, we reprint the tale, with the publisher's permission, after the author's narrative."

husband's personalty and a life interest in *one-third* of his real estate possessed during marriage.

Moreover, in 1888, at the time the agitation for reform began, Kentucky was the only State in the Union where a married woman could not make a will.

Unless she was made a *feme sole*, no married woman could buy or sell with the freedom of the single woman. To be made a *feme sole* legal proceedings under a general act of the legislature were required, and even this relief could not be had unless the husband gave his consent.

Instances of the injustice of the law came to my notice from every part of Kentucky and prompted me to write "Sally Ann's Experience." The story made a two-years' pilgrimage from one magazine to another, and was finally accepted and published by the *Cosmopolitan* in 1898. Not many

weeks after its publication in this country, it reappeared in a woman's paper in far-off New Zealand, and to-day there is not an English-speaking country where Sally Ann has not told her experience.

The *Woman's Journal* of Boston has published the story three times, and each time the edition containing it has been exhausted. "Sally Ann's Experience" was made the initial story in my book issued in 1908 under the title of "Aunt Jane of Kentucky," and a few months later President Roosevelt, in the course of a speech, recommended the use of the story "as a tract in all families where the men folks tend to selfish or thoughtless or overbearing disregard of the rights of their womankind." Then, through the *Ladies' Home Journal*, Sally Ann preached her gospel to a million readers. In July, 1908, ten years from the date of its first publication, the *Cosmopolitan* re-

published the little tale. Selections from it have been used for eleven years by dramatic readers and teachers of elocution. In 1899 a noted platform reader wrote as follows to me:

"I read the sketch almost a year ago, and since then I have read it about thirty times before audiences of all kinds. Whether, as on one occasion, when the audience numbered five thousand, or before a select club, 'Sally Ann's' reception is always the same. There are tears for poor 'Lizabeth and peals of laughter and rounds of applause as 'Sally Ann' piles up her points. I read it every day for a week at —— Chautauqua, and the committee that waited on me to arrange for the lecture course next winter said: 'We have but one request to make of you; you must give us "Sally Ann's Experience."'"

Platform readers are not the only ones who have recognized the dramatic qualities of the sketch. More than one playwright has made application for permission to

dramatize the story, and Sally Ann may some day deliver her message in a drama.

In my scrap-book there are letters from the North, the South, the East, and the West; from young and old, high and low; from the cultured and the uncultured; from doctors, lawyers, editors, business men, and women in various walks of life, all endorsing Sally Ann, and thanking her for giving her experience. And the letters still come, both to me and to the *Cosmopolitan*, though it is nearly twelve years since the first publication of the story.

What is the reason for this popularity? There is no glamour of romance about this little story, no fine rhetoric, no startling plot or unusual incident. It is only a plain tale of plain people told in the plain dialect of a plain old woman.

In making up the incidents that composed Sally Ann's prayer-meeting talk, I drew

largely on my imagination, and I feared that I had made out an exaggerated case against the men folks of Goshen. But I have learned since, from readers far and wide, that every incident in my story may be duplicated over and over from real life, and I am forced to the conclusion that "Sally Ann's Experience" is in some degree the experience of nearly every married woman; and as long as the spirit of the old English common law survives in man, the financial relations between husband and wife will continue to be a theme certain of touching the universal heart.

The story has already lived beyond the allotted time of such fiction. Some critics say it is a classic and will never die. Should this be true, it will be because it is a human document, the chronicle of an ancient wrong that has touched directly or indirectly the life of nearly every woman. And as a geol-

ogist can from one fossil construct the life of a whole period, so the sociologist, generations hence, may read in this story a record of the time when tyranny and selfishness put on the mask of chivalry and laid a mailed hand upon the rights of woman, when woman's growing self-respect made her rise in revolt, and out of her conflict and her victory came a higher civilization for the whole world.

SALLY ANN'S EXPERIENCE

Sally Ann's Experience

"COME right in and set down. I was jest wishin' I had somebody to talk to. Take that chair right by the door so 's you can get the breeze."

And Aunt Jane beamed at me over her silver-rimmed spectacles and hitched her own chair a little to one side, in order to give me the full benefit of the wind that was blowing softly through the white-curtained window, and carrying into the room the heavenliest odors from a field of clover that lay in full bloom just across the road. For it was June in

Kentucky, and clover and blue-grass were running sweet riot over the face of the earth.

Aunt Jane and her room together always carried me back to a dead and gone generation. There was a rag carpet on the floor, of the "hit-or-miss" pattern; the chairs were ancient Shaker rockers, some with homely "shuck" bottoms, and each had a tidy of snowy thread or crochet cotton fastened primly over the back. The high bed and bureau and a shining mahogany table suggested an era of "plain living" far, far remote from the day of Turkish rugs and Japanese bric-a-brac, and Aunt Jane was in perfect correspondence with her environment. She wore a purple calico dress, rather short and scant; a ging-

ham apron, with a capacious pocket, in which she always carried knitting or some other "handy work"; a white handkerchief was laid primly around the wrinkled throat and fastened with a pin containing a lock of gray hair; her cap was of black lace and lute-string ribbon, not one of the butterfly affairs that perch on the top of the puffs and frizzes of the modern old lady, but a substantial structure that covered her whole head and was tied securely under her chin. She talked in a sweet old treble with a little lisp, caused by the absence of teeth, and her laugh was as clear and joyous as a young girl's.

"Yes, I'm a-piecin' quilts again," she said, snipping away at the bits of calico in her lap. "I did say I

was done with that sort o' work; but this mornin' I was rummagin' around up in the garret, and I come across this bundle of pieces, and thinks I, 'I reckon it's intended for me to piece one more quilt before I die;' I must 'a' put 'em there thirty years ago and clean forgot 'em, and I've been settin' here all the evenin' cuttin' 'em and thinkin' about old times.

"Jest feel o' that," she continued, tossing some scraps into my lap. "There ain't any such caliker nowadays. This ain't your five-cent stuff that fades in the first washin' and wears out in the second. A caliker dress was somethin' worth buyin' and worth makin' up in them days. That blue-flowered piece was a dress I got the spring before Abram died.

Sally Ann's Experience

When I put on mournin' it was as good as new, and I give it to sister Mary. That one with the green ground and white figger was my niece Rebecca's. She wore it for the first time to the County Fair the year I took the premium on my salt-risin' bread and sponge cake. This black-an'-white piece Sally Ann Flint give me. I ricollect 't was in blackberry time, and I'd been out in the big pasture pickin' some for supper, and I stopped in at Sally Ann's for a drink o' water on my way back. She was cuttin' out this dress."

Aunt Jane broke off with a little soprano laugh.

"Did I ever tell you about Sally Ann's experience?" she said, as she laid two three-cornered pieces to-

gether and began to sew with her slender, nervous old fingers.

To find Aunt Jane alone and in a reminiscent mood! This was delightful.

"Do tell me," I said.

Aunt Jane was silent for a few moments. She always made this pause before beginning a story, and there was something impressive about it. I used to think she was making an invocation to the goddess of Memory.

"'T was forty years ago," she began musingly, "and the way of it was this. Our church was considerably out o' fix. It needed a new roof. Some o' the winder lights was out, and the floor was as bare as your hand, and always had been. The men folks managed to git the roof

shingled and the winders fixed, and us women in the Mite Society concluded we'd git a cyarpet. We'd been savin' up our money for some time, and we had about twelve dollars. I ricollect what a argument we had, for some of us wanted the cyarpet, and some wanted to give it to furrin missions, as we'd set out to do at first. Sally Ann was the one that settled it. She says at last — Sally Ann was in favor of the cyarpet — she says, 'Well, if any of the heathen fails to hear the gospel on account of our gittin' this cyarpet, they'll be saved anyhow, so Parson Page says. And if we send the money and they do hear the gospel, like as not they won't repent, and then they're certain to be

damned. And it seems to me as long as we ain't sure what they'll do, we might as well keep the money and git the cyarpet. I never did see much sense anyhow,' says she, 'in givin' people a chance to damn theirselves.'

"Well, we decided to take Sally Ann's advice, and we was talkin' about app'intin' a committee to go to town the follerin' Monday and pick out the cyarpet, when all at once 'Lizabeth Taylor — she was our treasurer — she spoke up, and says she, 'There ain't any use app'intin' that committee. The money's gone,' she says, sort o' short and quick. 'I kept it in my top bureau drawer, and when I went for it yesterday, it was gone. I'll pay it back if I'm ever

able, but I ain't able now.' And with that she got up and walked out o' the room, before any one could say a word, and we seen her goin' down the road lookin' straight before her and walkin' right fast.

"And we — we set there and stared at each other in a sort o' dazed way. I could see that everybody was thinkin' the same thing, but nobody said a word, till our minister's wife — she was as good a woman as ever lived — she says, '*Judge not.*'

"Them two words was jest like a sermon to us. Then Sally Ann spoke up and says: 'For the Lord's sake, don't let the men folks know anything about this. They're always sayin' that women ain't fit to handle money, and I for one don't want to

give 'em any more ground to stand on than they've already got.'

"So we agreed to say nothin' about it, and all of us kept our promise except Milly Amos. She had mighty little sense to begin with, and havin' been married only about two months, she'd about lost that little. So next mornin' I happened to meet Sam Amos, and he says to me, 'Aunt Jane, how much money have you women got to'rds the new cyarpet for the church?' I looked him square in the face, and I says, 'Are you a member of the Ladies' Mite Society of Goshen church, Sam Amos? For if you are, you already know how much money we've got, and if you ain't, you've got no business knowin'. And, furthermore,'

says I, 'there's some women that can't keep a secret and a promise, and some that can, and *I* can.' And that settled *him*.

"Well, 'Lizabeth never showed her face outside her door for more'n a month afterwards, and a more pitiful-lookin' creatur' you never saw than she was when she come out to prayer-meetin' the night Sally Ann give her experience. She set 'way back in the church, and she was as pale and peaked as if she had been through a siege of typhoid. I ricollect it all as if it had been yesterday. We sung 'Sweet Hour of Prayer,' and Parson Page prayed, and then called on the brethren to say anything they might feel called on to say concernin' their experience in the past week. Old

Sally Ann's Experience

Uncle Jim Matthews begun to clear his throat, and I knew, as well as I knew my name, he was fixin' to git up and tell how precious the Lord had been to his soul, jest like he'd been doin' every Wednesday night for twenty years. But before he got started, here come 'Lizabeth walkin' down the side aisle and stopped right in front o' the pulpit.

"'I've somethin' to say,' she says. 'It's been on my mind till I can't stand it any longer. I've got to tell it, or I'll go crazy. It was me that took that cyarpet money. I only meant to borrow it. I thought sure I'd be able to pay it back before it was wanted. But things went wrong, and I ain't known a peaceful minute since, and never shall again, I reckon.

I took it to pay my way up to Louisville, the time I got the news that Mary was dyin'.'

"Mary was her daughter by her first husband, you see. 'I begged Jacob to give me the money to go on,' says she, 'and he would n't do it. I tried to give up and stay, but I jest could n't. Mary was all I had in the world; and maybe you that has children can put yourself in my place, and know what it would be to hear your only child callin' to you from her death-bed, and you not able to go to her. I asked Jacob three times for the money,' she says, 'and when I found he would n't give it to me, I said to myself, "I'm goin' anyhow." I got down on my knees,' says she, 'and asked the Lord to

show me a way, and I felt sure he would. As soon as Jacob had eat his breakfast and gone out on the farm, I dressed myself, and as I opened the top bureau drawer to get out my best collar, I saw the missionary money. It come right into my head,' says she, 'that maybe this was the answer to my prayer; maybe I could borrow this money, and pay it back some way or other before it was called for. I tried to put it out o' my head, but the thought kept comin' back; and when I went down into the sittin'-room to get Jacob's cyarpetbag to carry a few things in, I happened to look up at the mantelpiece and saw the brass candlesticks with prisms all 'round 'em that used to belong to my mother;

and all at once I seemed to see jest what the Lord intended for me to do.

"'You know,' she says, 'I had a boarder summer before last — that lady from Louisville — and she wanted them candlesticks the worst kind, and offered me fifteen dollars for 'em. I would n't part with 'em then, but she said if ever I wanted to sell 'em, to let her know, and she left her name and address on a cyard. I went to the big Bible and got out the cyard, and I packed the candlesticks in the cyarpetbag, and put on my bonnet. When I opened the door I looked up the road, and the first thing I saw was Dave Crawford comin' along in his new buggy. I went out to the gate, and he drew up

and asked me if I was goin' to town, and said he'd take me. It looked like the Lord was leadin' me all the time,' says she, 'but the way things turned out it must 'a' been Satan. I got to Mary just two hours before she died, and she looked up in my face and says, "Mother, I knew God would n't let me die till I'd seen you once more."'"

Here Aunt Jane took off her glasses and wiped her eyes.

"I can't tell this without cryin' to save my life," said she; "but 'Lizabeth never shed a tear. She looked like she'd got past cryin', and she talked straight on as if she'd made up her mind to say jest so much, and she'd die if she did n't git to say it.

"'As soon as the funeral was over,' says she, 'I set out to find the lady that wanted the candlesticks. She was n't at home, but her niece was there, and said she'd heard her aunt speak of the candlesticks often; and she'd be home in a few days and would send me the money right off. I come home thinkin' it was all right, and I kept expectin' the money every day, but it never come till day before yesterday. I wrote three times about it, but I never got a word from her till Monday. She had just got home, she said, and hoped I had n't been inconvenienced by the delay. She wrote a nice, polite letter and sent me a check for fifteen dollars, and here it is. I wanted to confess it all that day at the Mite Society, but

somehow I could n't till I had the money right in my hand to pay back. If the lady had only come back when her niece said she was comin', it would all have turned out right, but I reckon it's a judgment on me for meddling with the Lord's money. God only knows what I've suffered,' says she, 'but if I had to do it over again, I believe I'd do it. Mary was all the child I had in the world, and I had to see her once more before she died. I've been a member of this church for twenty years,' says she, 'but I reckon you'll have to turn me out now.'

"The pore thing stood there tremblin' and holdin' out the check as if she expected somebody to come and take it. Old Silas Petty was glow-

erin' at her from under his eyebrows, and it put me in mind of the Pharisees and the woman they wanted to stone, and I ricollect thinkin', 'Oh, if the Lord Jesus would jest come in and take her part!' And while we all set there like a passel o' mutes, Sally Ann got up and marched down the middle aisle and stood right by 'Lizabeth. You know what funny thoughts people will have sometimes.

"Well, I felt so relieved. It popped into my head all at once that we did n't need the Lord after all, Sally Ann would do jest as well. It seemed sort o' like sacrilege, but I could n't help it.

"Well, Sally Ann looked all around as composed as you please, and says she, 'I reckon if anybody 's turned

out o' this church on account o' that miserable little money, it'll be Jacob and not 'Lizabeth. A man that won't give his wife money to go to her dyin' child is too mean to stay in a Christian church anyhow; and I'd like to know how it is that a woman, that had eight hundred dollars when she married, has to go to her husband and git down on her knees and beg for what's her own. Where's that money 'Lizabeth had when she married you?' says she, turnin' round and lookin' Jacob in the face. 'Down in that ten-acre medder lot, ain't it? — and in that new barn you built last spring. A pretty elder you are, ain't you? Elders don't seem to have improved much since Susannah's times. If there ain't one sort

o' meanness in 'em it's another,' says she.

"Goodness knows what she would 'a' said, but jest here old Deacon Petty rose up. And says he, 'Brethren,' — and he spread his arms out and waved 'em up and down like he was goin' to pray, — 'brethren, this is awful! If this woman wants to give her religious experience, why,' says he, very kind and condescendin', 'of course she can do so. But when it comes to *a woman* standin' up in the house of the Lord and revilin' an elder as this woman is doin', why, I tremble,' says he, 'for the church of Christ. For don't the Apostle Paul say, "Let your women keep silence in the church"?'

"As soon as he named the 'Postle

Paul, Sally Ann give a kind of snort. Sally Ann was terrible free-spoken. And when Deacon Petty said that, she jest squared herself like she intended to stand there till judgment day, and says she, 'The 'Postle Paul has been dead ruther too long for me to be afraid of him. And I never heard of him app'intin' Deacon Petty to represent him in this church. If the 'Postle Paul don't like what I'm sayin', let him rise up from his grave in Corinthians or Ephesians, or wherever he's buried, and say so. I've got a message from the Lord to the men folks of this church, and I'm goin' to deliver it, Paul or no Paul,' says she. 'And as for you, Silas Petty, I ain't forgot the time I dropped in to see Maria one Saturday night and

found her washin' out her flannel petticoat and dryin' it before the fire. And every time I've had to hear you lead in prayer since then I've said to myself, "Lord, how high can a man's prayers rise toward heaven when his wife ain't got but one flannel skirt to her name? No higher than the back of his pew, if you'll let me tell it." I knew jest how it was,' said Sally Ann, 'as well as if Maria'd told me. She'd been havin' the milk and butter money from the old roan cow she'd raised from a little heifer, and jest because feed was scarce, you'd sold her off before Maria had money enough to buy her winter flannels. I can give my experience, can I? Well, that's jest what I'm a-doin',' says she; 'and while I'm

about it,' says she, 'I'll give in some experience for 'Lizabeth and Maria and the rest of the women who, betwixt their husbands an' the 'Postle Paul, have about lost all the gumption and grit that the Lord started them out with. If the 'Postle Paul,' says she, 'has got anything to say about a woman workin' like a slave for twenty-five years and then havin' to set up an' wash out her clothes Saturday night, so's she can go to church clean Sunday mornin', I'd like to hear it. But don't you dare to say anything to me about keepin' silence in the church. There was times when Paul says he did n't know whether he had the Spirit of God or not, and I'm certain that when he wrote that text he was n't any more

inspired than you are, Silas Petty, when you tell Maria to shut her mouth.'

"Job Taylor was settin' right in front of Deacon Petty, and I reckon he thought his time was comin' next; so he gets up, easy-like, with his red bandanna to his mouth, and starts out. But Sally Ann headed him off before he'd gone six steps, and says she, 'There ain't anything the matter with you, Job Taylor; you set right down and hear what I've got to say. I've knelt and stood through enough o' your long-winded prayers, and now it's my time to talk and yours to listen.'

"And bless your life, if Job did n't set down as meek as Moses, and Sally Ann lit right into him. And

says she, 'I reckon you're afraid I'll tell some o' your meanness, ain't you? And the only thing that stands in my way is that there's so much to tell I don't know where to begin. There ain't a woman in this church,' says she, 'that don't know how Marthy scrimped and worked and saved to buy her a new set o' furniture, and how you took the money with you when you went to Cincinnata, the spring before she died, and come back without the furniture. And when she asked you for the money, you told her that she and everything she had belonged to you, and that your mother's old furniture was good enough for anybody. It's my belief,' says she, 'that's what killed Marthy. Women are dyin' every day, and the

doctors will tell you it's some new-fangled disease or other, when, if the truth was known, it's nothin' but wantin' somethin' they can't git, and hopin' and waitin' for somethin' that never comes. I've watched 'em, and I know. The night before Marthy died she says to me, "Sally Ann," says she, "I could die a heap peace-fuler if I jest knew the front room was fixed up right with a new set of furniture for the funeral."' And Sally Ann p'inted her finger right at Job and says she, 'I said it then, and I say it now to your face, Job Taylor, you killed Marthy the same as if you'd taken her by the throat and choked the life out of her.'

"Mary Embry, Job's sister-in-law, was settin' right behind me, and I

heard her say, 'Amen!' as fervent as if somebody had been prayin'. Job set there, lookin' like a sheep-killin' dog, and Sally Ann went right on. 'I know,' says she, 'the law gives you the right to your wives' earnin's and everything they've got, down to the clothes on their backs; and I've always said there was some Kentucky law that was made for the express purpose of encouragin' men in their natural meanness, — a p'int in which the Lord knows they don't need no encouragin'. There's some men,' says she, 'that'll sneak behind the 'Postle Paul when they're plannin' any meanness against their wives, and some that runs to the law, and you're one of the law kind. But mark my words,' says she, 'one of

these days, you men who've been stealin' your wives' property and defraudin' 'em, and cheatin' 'em out o' their just dues, you'll have to stand before a Judge that cares mighty little for Kentucky law; and all the law and all the Scripture you can bring up won't save you from goin' where the rich man went.'

"I can see Sally Ann right now," and Aunt Jane pushed her glasses up on her forehead, and looked with a dreamy, retrospective gaze through the doorway and beyond, where swaying elms and maples were whispering softly to each other as the breeze touched them. "She had on her old black poke-bonnet and some black yarn mitts, and she did n't come nigh up to Job's shoulder, but

Job set and listened as if he jest *had to.* I heard Dave Crawford shufflin' his feet and clearin' his throat while Sally Ann was talkin' to Job. Dave's farm j'ined Sally Ann's, and they had a lawsuit once about the way a fence ought to run, and Sally Ann beat him. He always despised Sally Ann after that, and used to call her a 'he-woman.' Sally Ann heard the shufflin', and as soon as she got through with Job, she turned around to Dave, and says she: 'Do you think your hemmin' and scrapin' is goin' to stop me, Dave Crawford? You're one o' the men that makes me think that it's better to be a Kentucky horse than a Kentucky woman. Many's the time,' says she, 'I've seen pore July with her head tied

up, crawlin' around tryin' to cook for sixteen harvest hands, and you out in the stable cossetin' up a sick mare, and rubbin' down your three-year-olds to get 'em in trim for the fair. Of all the things that's hard to understand,' says she, 'the hardest is a man that has more mercy on his horse than he has on his wife. July's found rest at last,' says she, 'out in the graveyard; and every time I pass your house I thank the Lord that you've got to pay a good price for your cookin' now, as there ain't a woman in the country fool enough to step into July's shoes.'

"But, la!" said Aunt Jane, breaking off with her happy laugh, — the laugh of one who revels in rich memories, — "what's the use of me

tellin' all this stuff? The long and the short of it is, that Sally Ann had her say about nearly every man in the church. She told how Mary Embry had to cut up her weddin' skirts to make clothes for her first baby; and how John Martin stopped Hannah one day when she was carryin' her mother a pound of butter, and made her go back and put the butter down in the cellar; and how Lije Davison used to make Ann pay him for every bit of chicken feed, and then take half the egg money because the chickens got into his garden; and how Abner Page give his wife twenty-five cents for spendin' money the time she went to visit her sister.

"Sally Ann always was a master-

ful sort of woman, and that night it seemed like she was possessed. The way she talked made me think of the Day of Pentecost and the gift of tongues. And finally she got to the minister! I'd been wonderin' all along if she was goin' to let him off. She turned around to where he was settin' under the pulpit, and says she, 'Brother Page, you're a good man, but you ain't so good you could n't be better. It was jest last week,' says she, 'that the women come around beggin' money to buy you a new suit of clothes to go to Presbytery in; and I told 'em if it was to get Mis' Page a new dress, I was ready to give; but not a dime was I goin' to give towards puttin' finery on a man's back. I'm tired o'

seein' the ministers walk up into the pulpit in their slick black broadcloths, and their wives settin' down in the pew in an old black silk that 's been turned upside down, wrong side out, and hind part before, and sponged, and pressed, and made over till you can't tell whether it's silk, or caliker, or what.'

"Well, I reckon there was some o' the women that expected the roof to fall down on us when Sally Ann said that right to the minister. But it did n't fall, and Sally Ann went straight on. 'And when it comes to the perseverance of the saints and the decrees of God,' says she, 'there ain't many can preach a better sermon; but there's some of your sermons,' says she, 'that ain't fit for

much but kindlin' fires. There's that one you preached last Sunday on the twenty-fourth verse of the fifth chapter of Ephesians. I reckon I've heard about a hundred and fifty sermons on that text, and I reckon I'll keep on hearin' 'em as long as there ain't anybody but men to do the preachin'. Anybody would think,' says she, 'that you preachers was struck blind every time you git through with the twenty-fourth verse, for I never heard a sermon on the twenty-fifth verse. I believe there's men in this church that thinks the fifth chapter of Ephesians has n't got but twenty-four verses, and I'm goin' to read the rest of it to 'em for once anyhow.'

"And if Sally Ann did n't walk

right up into the pulpit same as if she'd been ordained, and read what Paul said about men lovin' their wives as Christ loved the church, and as they loved their own bodies.

"'Now,' says she, 'if Brother Page can reconcile these texts with what Paul says about women submittin' and bein' subject, he's welcome to do it. But,' says she, 'if I had the preachin' to do, I would n't waste time reconcilin'. I'd jest say that when Paul told women to be subject to their husbands in everything, he was n't inspired; and when he told men to love their wives as their own bodies, he was inspired; and I'd like to see the Presbytery that could silence me from preachin' as long as I wanted to preach. As for turnin'

out o' the church,' says she, 'I'd like to know who's to do the turnin' out. When the disciples brought that woman to Christ there was n't a man in the crowd fit to cast a stone at her; and if there's any man nowadays good enough to set in judgment on a woman, his name ain't on the rolls of Goshen church. If 'Lizabeth,' says she, 'had as much common sense as she's got conscience, she'd know that the matter o' that money did n't concern nobody but our Mite Society, and we women can settle it without any help from you deacons and elders.'

"Well, I reckon Parson Page thought if he did n't head Sally Ann off some way or other she'd go on all night; so when she kind o' stopped

for breath and shut up the big Bible, he grabbed a hymn-book and says:

"'Let us sing "Blest be the Tie that Binds."'

"He struck up the tune himself; and about the middle of the first verse Mis' Page got up and went over to where 'Lizabeth was standin', and give her the right hand of fellowship, and then Mis' Petty did the same; and first thing we knew we was all around her shakin' hands and huggin' her and cryin' over her. 'T was a reg'lar love-feast; and we went home feelin' like we'd been through a big protracted meetin' and got religion over again.

"'T was n't more 'n a week till 'Lizabeth was down with slow fever — nervous collapse, old Dr. Pendleton

called it. We took turns nursin' her, and one day she looked up in my face and says, 'Jane, I know now what the mercy of the Lord is.'"

Here Aunt Jane paused, and began to cut three-cornered pieces out of a time-stained square of flowered chintz. The quilt was to be of the wild-goose pattern. There was a drowsy hum from the beehive near the window, and the shadows were lengthening as sunset approached.

"One queer thing about it," she resumed, "was that while Sally Ann was talkin', not one of us felt like laughin'. We set there as solemn as if parson was preachin' to us on 'lection and predestination. But whenever I think about it now, I laugh fit to kill. And I've thought

many a time that Sally Ann's plain talk to them men done more good than all the sermons us women had had preached to us about bein' 'shamefaced' and 'submittin'' ourselves to our husbands, for every one o' them women come out in new clothes that spring, and such a change as it made in some of 'em! I would n't be surprised if she did have a message to deliver, jest as she said. The Bible says an ass spoke up once and reproved a man, and I reckon if an ass can reprove a man, so can a woman. And it looks to me like men stand in need of reprovin' now as much as they did in Balaam's days.

"Jacob died the follerin' fall, and 'Lizabeth got shed of her troubles.

The triflin' scamp never married her for anything but her money.

"Things is different from what they used to be," she went on, as she folded her pieces into a compact bundle and tied it with a piece of gray yarn. "My son-in-law was tellin' me last summer how a passel o' women kept goin' up to Frankfort and so pesterin' the Legislatur', that they had to change the laws to git rid of 'em. So married women now has all the property rights they want, and more'n some of 'em has sense to use, I reckon."

"How about you and Uncle Abram?" I suggested. "Did n't Sally Ann say anything about you in her experience?"

Aunt Jane's black eyes snapped

with some of the fire of her long-past youth. "La! no, child," she said. "Abram never was that kind of a man, and I never was that kind of a woman. I ricollect as we was walkin' home that night Abram says, sort o' humble-like: 'Jane, had n't you better git that brown merino you was lookin' at last County Court day?'

"And I says, 'Don't you worry about that brown merino, Abram. It's a-lyin' in my bottom drawer right now. I told the storekeeper to cut it off jest as soon as your back was turned, and Mis' Simpson is goin' to make it next week.' And Abram he jest laughed, and says, 'Well, Jane, I never saw your beat.' You see, I never was any hand at

'submittin'' myself to my husband, like some women. I've often wondered if Abram would n't 'a' been jest like Silas Petty if I'd been like Maria. I've noticed that whenever a woman's willin' to be imposed upon, there's always a man standin' 'round ready to do the imposin'. I never went to a law-book to find out what my rights was. I did my duty faithful to Abram, and when I wanted anything I went and got it, and Abram paid for it, and I can't see but what we got on jest as well as we'd 'a' done if I'd a-'submitted' myself."

Longer and longer grew the shadows, and the faint tinkle of bells came in through the windows. The cows were beginning to come

home. The spell of Aunt Jane's dramatic art was upon me. I began to feel that my own personality had somehow slipped away from me, and those dead people, evoked from their graves by an old woman's histrionism, seemed more real to me than my living, breathing self.

"There now, I've talked you clean to death," she said with a happy laugh, as I rose to go. "But we've had a real nice time, and I'm glad you come."

The sun was almost down as I walked slowly away. When I looked back, at the turn of the road, Aunt Jane was standing on the doorstep, shading her eyes and peering across the level fields. I knew what it meant. Beyond the fields was a

bit of woodland, and in one corner of that you might, if your eyesight was good, discern here and there a glimpse of white. It was the old burying-ground of Goshen church; and I knew by the strained attitude and intent gaze of the watcher in the door that somewhere in the sun-lit space between Aunt Jane's door-step and the little country graveyard, the souls of the living and the dead were keeping a silent tryst.

The Land of Long Ago

By

Eliza Calvert Hall

Author of

"Aunt Jane of Kentucky"

Illustrated by

G. Patrick Nelson

&

Beulah Strong

Boston

Little, Brown, & Company

1909

12mo. Decorated cloth. $1.50

THE LAND OF LONG AGO

By Eliza Calvert Hall

CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I. A Ride to Town

II. The House that was a Wedding Fee

III. The Courtship of Miss Amaryllis

IV. Aunt Jane Goes A-Visiting

V. The Marriage Problem in Goshen

VI. An Eye for an Eye

VII. The Reformation of Sam Amos

VIII. In War Time

IX. The Watch Meeting

Eightieth Thousand

Aunt Jane of Kentucky

By Eliza Calvert Hall

ILLUSTRATED BY BEULAH STRONG

CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I. SALLY ANN'S EXPERIENCE

II. THE NEW ORGAN

III. AUNT JANE'S ALBUM

IV. "SWEET DAY OF REST"

V. MILLY BAKER'S BOY

VI. THE BAPTIZING AT KITTLE CREEK

VII. HOW SAM AMOS RODE IN THE TOURNAMENT

VIII. MARY ANDREWS' DINNER PARTY

IX. THE GARDENS OF MEMORY

12mo. Decorated Cloth. $1.50

Eliza Calvert Hall's

Tender and charming pictures of rural Kentucky life evoke the deepest sympathy from every human heart with which their characters come in contact.

Ex-President Theodore Roosevelt says: "Have you read that charming little book written by one of your clever Kentucky women — 'Aunt Jane of Kentucky' — by Eliza Calvert Hall? It is very wholesome and attractive. Be sure that you read it."

The New York Times says that "where so many have made caricatures of old-time country folk, Eliza Calvert Hall has caught at once the real charm, the real spirit, the real people, and the real joy of living which was theirs."

The Louisville Times says that "everyone is sure to love Aunt Jane and her neighbors, her quilts and her flowers, her stories and her quaint, tender philosophy."

The Boston Woman's Journal describes "Aunt Jane of Kentucky" as "a graphic picture of real life, portrayed with that inexplicable ability we call 'genius.'"

"Like the fragrance of old rose leaves," says *The San Francisco Chronicle*, "is 'The Land of Long Ago.'"

Of "The Land of Long Ago," *The Boston Transcript* says: "To a greater degree than her previous work it touches the heart by its wholesome, quaint, human appeal."

Y0-EQZ-885